

Mac's Work on National Security

Six months before 9/11, on March 21, 2001, Mac Thornberry introduced a bill to establish a National Homeland Security Agency to better protect our country from terrorist attacks. Drawing on the recommendations of the Hart-Rudman Commission, Mac's bill served as the foundation for the legislation that established the Department of Homeland Security.

In the words of Congressional Quarterly, his efforts "gave Thornberry an aura of prescience as soon as the World Trade Center's twin towers were felled and the Pentagon was torn open by hijacked airliners."

Mac has consistently been on the leading edge of critical national security issues, from homeland security and nonproliferation to transformation of the military, nuclear deterrence, and cybersecurity.

Defense News called Thornberry "a smart hawk who's not afraid to buck the party line." Congressional Quarterly identified him as one of the key lawmakers shaping the agenda of the "War Congress." National Journal identified him as a "Republican to watch," calling him an E.F. Hutton of Congress (because when he talks about defense and homeland security issues, people—and his colleagues on Capitol Hill—listen). Esquire says he's "a distinguished thinker on defense issues and foreign affairs" and "an informed, dispassionate expert on national security and intelligence."

Thornberry has written widely on defense matters and has appeared on CNN, MSNBC, Fox News, PBS, CBS, ABC, and C-SPAN to provide congressional insight on homeland and national security issues.

Appointed in late 2004 to the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence (HPSCI), Thornberry has immersed himself in the complex intelligence challenges facing the nation. In the 111th Congress, he is the top republican on the Tactical and Technical Intelligence Subcommittee, which has responsibility for overseeing the programs, activities, and budgets of the National Reconnaissance Program, the National Geospatial Intelligence Program, the Consolidated Cryptologic Program, and the technical collection activities associated with the CIA and with DOD activities funded through the Military Intelligence Program.

In the 109th Congress, he served as the first Chairman of the newly created Intelligence Subcommittee on Oversight, where he focused primarily on overseeing the implementation of the reforms contained in the "Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004," also known as the "9/11 Bill," and on improving the management of the intelligence community. The subcommittee also played a significant role in issues related to the intelligence community's response to terrorism.

Mac has served on the Armed Services Committee since he entered Congress. He is a senior member of the Strategic Forces Subcommittee and the Terrorism,

Unconventional Threats, and Capabilities Subcommittee, where he served as the subcommittee's top Republican during the 110th Congress. Mac has pushed strategic communications issues, as well as advocating for greater interagency cooperation in the fight against violent extremists. He also believes it is essential for the United States to develop a deep understanding of terrorism in order to take appropriate action to prevent its spread.

From 1999 through 2002, Thornberry served as chairman of a special Armed Services Committee panel that conducted oversight of the reorganization of the nations' nuclear weapons complex. He was the leading advocate in the House for organizational reform that led to the creation of the National Nuclear Security Administration, a semi-autonomous agency within the Department of Energy, charged with ensuring the nuclear weapons complex is properly managed and that the nuclear weapons stockpile remains viable and a part of the strategic deterrent against future adversaries.

During the 108th Congress, Mac was appointed to the Select Committee on Homeland Security and served as the chairman of the Subcommittee on Cybersecurity, Science, and Research and Development. His main efforts focused on developing the government partnership with the private sector which is essential in protecting vital infrastructure across the nation and in ensuring that the U.S. remains a leader in Homeland Security science and technology.

In addition, Thornberry has been a member of the U.S. Joint Forces Command, Transformation Advisory Group (TAG) since its inception. The TAG provides the military with advice on defense and transformation policies and future issues. Mac was one of the members urging for the creation of the Command in order to ensure that the military had a voice for future needs and requirements.

Mac was a member of the CSIS Smart Power Commission which issued its report in November 2007 arguing that the nation needs to have the full range of instruments of natural power and influence in order to accomplish our national policy goals.

He serves on the Executive Steering Committee of the Strategic Policy Forum, a group organized by the Office of the Secretary of Defense to conduct war games and exercises in which Members of Congress and officials from the Executive Branch can participate together to shed light on current and future national security challenges.

Mac is also a member of the Council on Foreign Relations.